

## Message Text

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ACTION PER-03

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----- 092992  
R 311300Z JUL 76  
FM AMEMBASSY SANA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8667

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: AFSY, YE  
SUBJECT: FSLE REACTION TO WAGE SCALE OF JUNE 29, 1976

REF: SANA 2182

1. ON THE MORNING OF JULY 27, FOLLOWING PETITION SIGNED BY ALL FSLE AND CONTRACTUAL STAFF WAS PRESENTED TO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:  
" WE THE UNDERSIGNED EMPLOYEES HAVING EXERCISED AND EXHAUSTED ALL THE RECOGNIZED WAYS AND MEANS OF ORDERLY APPROACHES, REPRESENTATIONS, REQUESTS AND PLEAS FOR A VERY JUSTIFIED AND OVER-DUE GENUINE AND REALISTIC WAGE REVIEW AND WHICH APPROACHES, REPRESENTATIONS, REQUESTS AND PLEAS HAVE UNTIL THIS VERY MOMENT RECEIVED VERY VERY NEGLIGIBLE AND WHICH IN SUBSTANCE IS AN ADVERSE NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

"WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED THAT WITH EFFECT FROM AUGUST 1, 1976, TO UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING STAFF ACTION:

- 1) FIRST WORKING WEEK: TO ATTEND OUR OFFICES BUT TO REFRAIN FROM DOING ANY WORK FOR ONE HOUR DAILY, AT RANDOM DURING THE WEEK.
- 2) SECOND WORKING WEEK: - DITTO - TWO HOURS
- 3) THIRD WORKING WEEK: - DITTO - THREE HOURS
- 4) FOURTH WORKING WEEK: - DITTO - FOUR HOURS."

2. PETITION WAS ACCEPTED BY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
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WITH THE COMMENT THAT, ALTHOUGH HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THE

WAGE SITUATION, SUCH ACTION WAS IN CONTRAVENTION WITH 3 FAM 973.2 AND SF-61, AS IT CONSTITUTES A STRIKE. ADMIN OFFICER POINTED OUT ACTION EXPOSED THEM TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION INCLUDING DISMISSAL. POINTED OUT THAT IN YEMEN SUCH ACTION WAS ILLEGAL. ALL FSLE PERSONNEL, AS A GROUP, CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD NO INTENTION TO CALL FOR A STRIKE AND FELT THAT THE PROTEST FOUND IN PARA 1 DID NOT CONSTITUTE ONE. IT WAS, THEY SAID, ONLY AN ATTEMPT TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF MANAGEMENT THEIR STRONG FEELINGS REGARDING WHAT THEY FELT WAS A NON-LIVABLE WAGE.

3. ADMIN OFFICER EXPLAINED VERY EMPHATICALLY THAT THE USG WAS IN NO WAY GOING TO BE BLACKMAILED INTO ANY ACTION. THE FSLE'S ALL AGREED THAT IT WAS NOT THEIR INTENTION TO STRIKE (ILLEGAL IN YEMEN ANYWAY) AND THAT THEY WOULD WITHDRAW THE PETITION BUT THAT THEY WISHED THE SAME TO BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON TO LET THE DEPARTMENT KNOW HOW THEY, AS A GROUP, FELT.

4. BY THE VERY FACT THAT THE PRESENT FSLE STAFF CHOSE THIS FORM OF PROTEST RATHER THAN A DIRECT THREAT SUCH AS MASS RESIGNATIONS INDICATED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS (SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED IN A GROUP MEETING WITH FSLE'S) THAT THEY REALLY WISH TO CONTINUE TO WORK FOR THE USG, THAT THEY ARE BASICALLY LOYAL, BUT THAT THEY FEEL THE LOCAL COST OF LIVING IN SANA HAS GOTTEN TO THE POINT THAT THEIR WAGES ARE INSUFFICIENT.

5. THE PRESENT WAGE SCALE, WHICH CAUSED 12 FSLE'S OUT OF 17 TO BECOME STAGNANT OR NO CHANGE, WAS A CRUSHING BLOW. THIS WAS FURTHER AGGRAVATED WHEN ON JULY 26, THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP) RECEIVED FROM NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS AN INCREASE THAT RANGED FROM 63 PERCENT FOR THE LOWER GRADES TO 28 PERCENT AT THE HIGHEST GRADE. THIS INCREASE WAS BASED ON A SURVEY OF FOUR FIRMS: U.S. EMBASSY (FEBRUARY SCALE), CABLE AND WIRELESS (BRITISH FIRM), BRITISH EMBASSY, AND FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK.

6. SITUATION WILL BECOME MORE UNBEARABLE WHEN OUR FSLE STAFF LEARN THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY, KNOWN LAGGARD IN THE PAY FIELD, HAVE HAD APPROVED AN INCREASE THAT RANGES FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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50 PERCENT AT THE LOWEST GRADE TO 10 PERCENT AT THE HIGHEST GRADES. THIS INFORMATION IS STILL CONFIDENTIAL BUT BRITISH EMBASSY WILL IMPLEMENT AUGUST 1. BRITISH ADMIN OFFICER WILL RELEASE ACTUAL FIGURES ON AUGUST 1, BUT COMMENTED THAT NOW HIS SCALE HAS SURPASSED USG (JUNE 29) SCALE IN ALL BUT ONE MIDDLE (OUR 5) CLASS.

7. EMBASSY, AFTER MUCH CONSIDERATION, HAS TWO POSSIBLE

SOLUTIONS WHICH MIGHT BRING MISSION SCALE BACK INTO  
LINE WITH OTHER EUROPEAN RPT EUROPEAN FIRMS  
WHICH ACTIVELY COMPETE FOR OUR TYPE OF STAFF:  
(A) OF THE ORIGINAL TWELVE FIRMS SURVEYED BY THE WAGE  
SURVEY TEAM, SIX WERE EITHER YEMENI, OR ARAB. THESE FIRMS HAVE  
NEVER ENTERED INTO ANY WAGE SURVEY BY ANY EUROPEAN FIRM  
IN SANA. THE YEMEN/ARAB FIRMS ADHERE TO LOCAL CUSTOM,  
VERY SELDOM REQUIRE BI-LINGUAL ABILITIES, EITHER WRITTEN,  
SPOKEN, TYPING, OR COMPREHENSION. THE PERKS GIVEN TO  
EMPLOYEES OF THESE FIRMS TAKE THE FORM OF GOODS OR HOUSING,  
THE TYPICAL ARABIC WORKING STYLE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE  
EUROPEAN STYLE, WHERE EMPLOYEES ARE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE,  
EXCEL, WORK HARD, WORK EXACT HOURS, ETC., ETC. IF  
WE NOW CONDUCT A SPOT CHECK OF THE 12 FIRMS ORIGINALLY  
SURVEYED OUR INCREASE WOULD BE SO PALTRY AS TO BE  
USELESS. AS POINTED OUT ABOVE YEMEN/ARAB FIRMS IN  
YEMEN BY THEIR NATURE, DO NOT CONDUCT WAGE SURVEYS, DO  
NOT HAVE A SYSTEM COMPATIBLE TO WESTERN FIRMS, AND DO NOT  
NEED THE SKILLS TO SURVIVE IN AN ARABIC COUNTRY AS DO  
WESTERN FIRMS. SINCE THE RESULTS OF THE WAGE SURVEY  
WERE TURNED DOWN ANYWAY, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE  
EMBASSY TO DELETE THE YEMENI/ARABIC FIRMS AND CONDUCT A  
SPOT SURVEY CONSISTING OF ONLY THE FIRMS WHERE THE  
COMPETITION REALLY EXISTS AND WHERE THE INCREASES  
ARE DOING THE MOST DAMAGE TO MORALE OF EMBASSY STAFF?  
(B) OR, AS AN ALTERNATIVE, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO ASK  
THE DEPARTMENT TO RE-REVIEW THE WAGE SURVEY  
RECOMMENDATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE TWO RECENT LARGE  
INCREASES GRANTED BY WESTERN FIRMS. IF THE TEAM  
RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED THEN THIS WOULD  
ESTABLISH A FIRM BASE THAT WOULD BE REALISTIC WITH THE  
MIX OF FIRMS SURVEYED. FROM THAT BASE THE EMBASSY  
COULD STAND TO TAKE A SPOT CHECK IN THE FUTURE OF ALL 12  
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FIRMS AND COME UP WITH A REASONABLE CROSS PICTURE OF THE  
LOCAL (BOTH YEMEN AND WESTERN) FIRMS AND THEIR WAGES.

8. AT PRESENT POST IS ONLY TRYING TO FIND AN  
EQUITABLE SOLUTION TO A VERY DEMORALIZING AND POTENTIALLY  
VERY DISRUPTIVE PROBLEM. EITHER OF THE TWO POSSIBLE  
SOLUTIONS PRESENTED IN PARA 7 WOULD PUT EMBASSY STAFF  
BACK SOMEWHAT IN LINE WITH THE VERY LARGE INCREASES GRANTED  
BY LIKE FIRMS IN SANA. OUR NATIONALS ARE TRYING TO COPE  
WITH A VERY DISAGREEABLE SITUATION IN YEMEN -- THAT OF  
RAPIDLY INCREASING COST OF LIVING (AVERAGE 30 PERCENT PER YEAR)  
VS. A 1.4 PERCENT OVERALL GAIN ON THE INCOME SIDE.

9. EMBASSY WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE IF DEPARTMENT WOULD  
CONSIDER ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS IN PARA 7 OR SUGGEST

SOME OTHER MANNER IN WHICH WE ALL CAN PUT THIS LONG  
OUTSTANDING MATTER TO REST.  
RANSOM

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